A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, January 8. 1709.

I Am willing to let the *Rehearſal* run his full Length, in his mighty Argument, of Baptiſm being a Regenerating Ordinance, before I begin again with that Head; I pretend not to abundance of Skill in Polemicks, nor ſhall I enter into that Province *as a Divine*; but ſince 'tis every Private Chriſtians Duty, to be able to defend the Doctrines they profeſs, at leaſt ſo to defend them, as to confirm their own Belief of them; ſo I may, I hope, without Invading the ſacred Office of the Miniſters, ſpeak to a Point ſo plain, and which every Chriſtian underſtands, (*viz.*) The Meaning, Efficacy, and Extent of the Ordinance of Baptiſm.

In the *Review*, N° 116. I gave you the Words of the XXVII Article of the Church of *England*, *Viz.* That it is a Sign of Regeneration;

> Baptiſm is a Sign of Regeneration or New-Birth, whereby as by an Inſtrument they that receive Baptiſm rightly are grafted into the Church; the Promiſes of the Forgiveneſs of Sin, and of our Adoption to be the Sons of GOD by the Holy Ghoſt are viſibly ſign'd and ſeal'd.

Mr.

Mr. *Rehearſal*, to come off of this, ſays, N°. 23. 'Tis the *Sign* and *the Thing ſignifyed too*, and brings a Learned Simily to prove it, *viz.* That of *Writing to convey an Eſtate* —— Not thinking, I ſuppoſe, or not remembring, that 'tis the Gift, not the Inſtrument of the Gift; the Purchaſe-Money paid, not the Deeds, that are the Subſtance of the Title to an Eſtate —— And if theſe are firm, tho' there were never any Deed of Gift, or Deed of Purchaſe Executed, yet THE RIGHT to the Eſtate remains Good, and *the Perſon ſhall poſſeſs it*; —— And let him go on with his Parallel, as far as he can; *I ſay*, that by his own Parallel, I will undertake to prove, That *Baptiſm*, as the Seal or Sign of Regeneration, cannot it ſelf give Regeneration; and if it cannot Regenerate, then the Perſon may be Regenerate without it; and if Regenerate WITHOUT BAPTISM, may be ſaved WITHOUT BAPTISM; *for Regeneration and Salvation are Inſeparables.* Rom. 8.

At the ſame time, I am far from leſſening the Value every Chriſtian has, and ought to have, for this moſt Valuable Inſtitution; and muſt ſay, That when the *Rehearſal* ſcurrilouſly and ſlanderouſly tells the World, That the Church of *Scotland* leſſens and undervalues this Ordinance, and will not Baptize an Infant, *tho' in extremity*, but at ſuch and ſuch a time, *viz.* after the Sermon; he groſsly abuſes the *World, and more that Church*; for I can give him ſufficient Teſtimony, that the Church of *Scotland* puts all the due Value on that Ordinance, which the other Proteſtant Churches in the World do, and that the Scripture or the Nature of the Thing demands; and at the ſame time that he tells us of a Child that expir'd before the Sermon was ended, and was not baptiſed; I can teſtifie, and bring him living Witneſſes to prove it, That the Miniſters in *Scotland*, have frequently in ſuch Caſes, broke off in the middle of the Sermon at the Requeſt of the Parent, and and on a Viſible Extremity to Baptize an Infant, and then proceeded on with the Sermon again; and I have ſeen a Miniſter in *Scotland* ſhorten and manifeſtly break off his Sermon, and ſhorten the uſual Exhortation in the Office of Baptiſm, in Caſe of the Extremity of the Child.

This is noted only to clear up the general Miſt of Prejudice, this *unfair Adverſary* would caſt before the Eyes of the World againſt the Church of *Scotland*, as if they rejected Baptiſm as unneceſſary, than which nothing can be more falſe or abſurd, tho' at the ſame time they cannot ſet up Baptiſm in the Room of the Spirit, which is the Author and Efficient in the Regeneration of a Believer; but I ſhall refer this Affair, till I ſee, whether he will offer any thing more material, than yet he has done to prove, that the Soul of the Infant is loſt without Baptiſm; which, I believe, will puzzle all his Sophiſtry.

Alſo I deſire he will tell me, whether Circumciſion, which was the Fore-runing Seal of GOD's Covenant before our Lord's coming, was ſo abſolutely neceſſary, that if an Infant had dy'd without it, that Infant had been out of the Church of GOD, *then confin'd to the Children of the Circumciſion*; for no doubt ſome Children dy'd before they were eight Days old then, as well as now, and we read of none circumcis'd before the eighth Day.

It is true, the Church of *Scotland* have made Orders againſt private Baptiſms, tho' not ſo ſtrict as this Author pretends; for I could name him ſeveral private Bapeiſms that I have ſeen in *Scotland*, but they do not approve them, neither does he, ſo much as publick; and the Difference lies only here, that he pretends Baptiſm abſolutely neceſſary to the Salvation of the Soul of the Child, which we challenge him to prove.

Again, in the Type of Baptiſm, *Circumciſion*, it was very rarely, if ever practis'd among the *Jews*, that they circumcis'd any Perſon, *Infant* or *Adult*, but in the Temple or Synagogues, *i. e.* in the publick Aſſemblies, that is to ſay, after they had a Temple; what they did in their Bondage or Wilderneſs-State is not to the Purpoſe.

But we are now come from his calm Arguing, *a Thing be once promis'd, but could not keep his Word*, to his old Way of Railing; and if Baptiſm be as neceſſary, as he ſays it is, he lays down the moſt horrid, helliſh

lish and abhor'd Position, that ever could come out of the Mouth of one that calls himself a Christian; see the Title of his Paper, N° 24.

N° 7. Better die without Baptism, *that is according to the* Rehearsal, N° 23. *without Regeneration*, than have it from the *Erastian Kirk*, that is the *Presbyterian* Kirk, for so he is pleas'd to term them, tho' they are farther from Erastianism than the Prelatists of *Scotland* by far.

So that in short, Damnation with him is better than Regeneration, if it must come by the Hand of a *Presbyterian* Minister.

To this he adds his own Authority, and in his *Billingsgate* Stile.

N° 6. Baptism by a Porter, better than by the Moderator of the general Assembly.

To which I must reply to him in the Gross, for it is paying him in his own Coin; Baptism by a *Presbyterian* Minister is as Antheotick, as Baptism by the Archbishop of *Canterbury*, *no Reflection upon his Grace*, and I prove it from the Practice of the Church of *England*, who, as much as they object against Presbyterial Ordination, and Presbyterial Re-ordination, yet never came up to his Length to re-baptize any that came over to them, who had been baptiz'd by Dissenting Ministers; tho' had they been baptiz'd by a Porter, it had been no Baptism, and they ought to re-baptize.

Again, what shall we say to, or do with a Man that will Lye? The Truth is, the best way is to let him Lye, for Lying will certainly expose the Cause he defends.

Now in the same Paper, he says, the *Presbyterians deny, that Private Baptism is better than none*, and say, that *none is better*, Rehearsal, N°. 21.

This is a downright Forgery, and a Man that will do this, ought to be talk'd with by a Whipping Post, not a Pen and Ink——— The *Presbyterians* have appointed the Time of Baptism *after Sermon*, the Place of Baptism *in the Assembly*; but that there are no Private Baptisms in *Scotland*, that the Ministers cannot Baptize before Sermon in the Assembly, or in Private out of the Assembly; and to affirm that they do not, is a notorious Falsity, contriv'd in his own Brain, and Vomited out with the overflowing of his Gall against the Church of *Scotland*.

And now I cannot but humbly apply my self, *even to the Church of* ENGLAND, from whom this Author and his Party for their Pernicious Principles are cast out, as they deserve——— And with the lowest Submission, propose a few Queries.

1. Whether it be Consonant to the Acts of Securities of both Churches Establish'd by and Incorporated into the General Treaty of UNION, by which the *Presbyterian Church* is acknowledg'd to be A TRUE CHURCH, and is settled and legally for ever Establish'd, under the Title of *The True Protestant Religion*, to suffer a Virulent Incendiary to Publish in Print, and Insult the said True Protestant Church with it; that they have no Gospel-Ministry, nor Right Administration of Ordinances, which is a direct Negative to the said Act of Parliament, and not being such, a Divider of the Nation TO JUSTICE?

2. Whether it is agreeable to the Nature *and Design* of the Union, *which was to Unite the Hearts of all Her Majesty's Subjects of whatsoever differing Opinions*, to suffer such Publick Insults of the *North British Nation*, and their Establish'd National Church, its Judicatories and Government, without due Punishment?

3. Whether this Treatment is the Way to reconcile the Scots to the Union, or to the *English* Nation, and whether it is likely to contribute to the future peaceable Deportment of the Nations towards one another, in order to preserve and render effectual, lasting and useful the Union it self, as all good Men desire?

4. Whe-